

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 163237

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICNAF, OCON, XN, US, CA

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE NORTHWEST
ATLANTIC FISHERIES

SUMMARY

1. THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED 25TH ANNUAL ICNAF MEETING WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL IN MEETING OVERALL U.S. OBJECTIVES. THE MAJOR U.S. GOAL WAS TO SECURE A LEVEL IN THE 1976 OVERALL SECOND TIER FINFISH QUOTA OFF THE U.S. NEW ENGLAND AND MID-ATLANTIC COAST (SUBAREA 5-STATISTICAL AREA 6) WHICH WOULD ALLOW A RAPID RECOVERY OF THE DEPLETED BIOMASS. (THIS QUOTA IS ALLOCATED NATIONALLY AND IMPOSED OVER INDIVIDUAL SPECIES QUOTAS IN THIS AREA, LIMITING WHAT COUNTRIES CAN HARVEST FROM THE ENTIRE SYSTEM. IT WAS APPROVED IN OCTOBER 1973 FOR THE PERIOD 1974-76 IN AN EFFORT TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE FOREIGN CATCHES OFF THE U.S. COAST. THE 1974-75 QUOTAS WERE SET AT LEVELS DESIGNED TO STABILIZE THE BIOMASS. THE COMMISSION'S OBJECTIVE WAS THAT THE 1976 QUOTA WOULD BE SET AT A LEVEL WHICH WOULD "ALLOW THE BIOMASS TO RECOVER TO THE LEVEL WHICH WILL PRODUCE THE MAXIMUM SUSTAINABLE YIELD (MSY)." WHILE THE QUOTA WAS SET AT 650,000 MT, SQUIDS WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE REGULATION, WHICH WAS NOT THE CASE UNDER EITHER THE 1974 OR 1975 QUOTAS. HENCE, THE QUOTA

LIMIT MUST BE VIEWED AS 650,000 IN ADDITION TO THE 74,000 MT FIRST TIER QUOTA FOR SQUIDS, OR EFFECTIVELY 724,000 MT. SCIENTISTS ESTIMATE THAT AT SUCH A LEVEL A FULL DECADE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR STOCK RECOVERY. IN ADDITION, THERE IS AN ASSOCIATED PROBABILITY OF APPROXIMATELY 30 PERCENT THAT RECOVERY WILL NOT BEGIN IN 1976 AND HENCE A LONGER RECOVERY PERIOD MAY BE REQUIRED. U.S. SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING AN INCREASE IN THE U.S. SHARE OF THE SECOND TIER OVERALL QUOTA IS APPROPRIATELY DIMINISHED AS A RESULT OF FAILURE TO SET THE QUOTA AT AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL. SIMILARLY, SUCCESS IN REDUCING MANY INDIVIDUAL FIRST TIER SPECIES QUOTAS SHOULD
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BE VIEWED AS MINOR SINCE ALL QUOTA REGULATIONS IN THIS AREA ARE PART OF A TOTAL PACKAGE, AND THE SECOND TIER OVERALL QUOTA IS INTENDED TO SERVE AS THE MORE RESTRICTIVE LIMITATION. ADDITIONALLY, THE MEETING FAILED TO PRODUCE AGREEMENT ON THE 60,000 MT QUOTA SOUGHT BY THE UNITED STATES FOR THE GEORGES BANK HERRING STOCK OFF THE NEW ENGLAND AND MID-ATLANTIC COAST. HOWEVER, THERE IS A REASONABLE CHANCE FOR A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE AT A SPECIAL JANUARY 1976 COMMISSION MEETING WHICH WAS SPECIFICALLY SCHEDULED TO CONSIDER THIS AND THE GULF OF MAINE HERRING QUOTA, (THE COMMISSION MAY BRING ANY REGULATIONS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED AT THIS MEETING IMMEDIATELY INTO FORCE). A SECOND U.S. ATTEMPT TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF

BOTTOM TRAWLS IN THE GEORGES BANK AREA IN ORDER TO PROTECT HADDOCK AND FLOUNDER STOCKS WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL. FINALLY, THE UNITED STATES HAD HOPED FOR MEASUREABLE PROGRESS ON A VARIETY OF MEASURES TO FACILITATE MONITORING AND CONTROL OF DIRECT AND INCIDENTAL FOREIGN CATCHES AND INCREASE THE GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION'S INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM. HOWEVER, AS IN PRIOR MEETINGS MOST MAJOR PROPOSALS IN THIS AREA WERE EITHER NOT APPROVED OR APPROVED IN AN AMENDED FORM WHICH SERIOUSLY LIMITS THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

2. THE SOLID OPPOSITION WHICH GREETED A CANADIAN PROPOSAL FOR A 40 PERCENT REDUCTION IN FISHING EFFORT ON GROUNDFISH STOCKS IN THE AREAS OFF THEIR COAST DID NOT COME AS A SURPRISE. IN ADDITION, CANADA WAS UNABLE TO SECURE AGREEMENT ON SUFFICIENTLY LOW TOTAL QUOTAS AND/OR THEIR ALLOCATIONS FOR 9 STOCKS IN THIS AREA. BOTH MATTERS WILL BE RECONSIDERED AT A SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING HOSTED BY CANADA SEPTEMBER 22-27, 1975, IN MONTREAL, AND SOME MATTERS FOR AREA OFF U.S. COAST WILL ALSO BE RECONSIDERED. END SUMMARY.

3. A CENTRAL CONCERN IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 1976 SECOND TIER OVERALL TAC WAS THE ASSOCIATED PERIOD OF RECOVERY OF THE BIOMASS TO THE LONG TERM OPTIMUM YIELD LEVEL.

THE OCTOBER 1973 OTTAWA AGREEMENT DOES NOT SPECIFY THE PERIOD IN WHICH THIS SHOULD OCCUR, ONLY THAT THE 1976 QUOTA

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SHOULD BE AT A LEVEL WHICH WILL ALLOW THE RECOVERY PROCESS TO BEGIN. IN THEIR REPORT ISSUED PRIOR TO THE MEETING, COMMISSION SCIENTISTS PROVIDED ESTIMATED RECOVERY PERIODS FOR VARIOUS QUOTA LEVELS, BASED ON THE INCLUSION OF ALL SQUIDS WITHIN THE REGULATED BIOMASS. IT WAS THE U.S. GOAL TO PROVIDE FOR A RECOVERY PERIOD IN 3-7 YEARS, WHICH WOULD MEAN AN OVERALL TAC IN THE 350,000-650,000 MT RANGE. UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT WAS IN FACT REACHED ON A 1976 TAC OF 650,000 MT FOLLOWING A U.S. PROPOSAL FOR 550,000 MT AND A SERIES OF VOTES ON NUMBERS RANGING UPWARDS TO 800,000 MT. HOWEVER, SPAIN REPEATED AN EARLIER PROPOSAL TO HAVE SQUIDS EXCLUDED FROM THE REGULATION, AND WAS SUPPORTED BY JAPAN AND ITALY, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE A MAJOR INTEREST IN THIS FISHERY. UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT NO SQUID CATCHES WOULD COUNT TOWARDS FULFILLMENT OF A NATION'S SECOND TIER OVERALL TAC, WHICH IS IN ALL CASES SMALLER AND THUS MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN TOTAL OF INDIVIDUAL FIRST TIER SPECIES QUOTAS. LEADERSHIP IN THE MATTER WAS SOON PROVIDED BY JAPAN, WHO OVERTURNED AN INITIAL NEGATIVE VOTE ON THE ISSUE (SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGING THE RULING OF THE CHAIR THAT THIS VOTE SHOULD STAND) AND OBTAINED SUFFICIENT SUPPORT IN A RE-VOTE TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL. ARGUMENTS FOR ITS EXCLUS-

ION STRESSED SUCH FACTORS AS THE UNDEREXPLOITED STATUS OF THE RESOURCE, ITS UNIQUE BIOLOGY (SHORT LIFE SPAN), AND VARIOUS SPECIAL NEEDS ON THE PART OF THOSE WITH MAJOR SQUID FISHERIES. THE UNITED STATES COUNTERED THAT SQUID WAS AN INTREGAL PART OF THE OVERALL BIOMASS, AND THAT ITS EXCLUSION WITHOUT AN APPROPRIATE REDUCTION IN THE 650,000 TAC THREATENED THE FOUNDATION OF CONSERVATION MEASURES CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. A SUBSEQUENT ELEVENTH HOUR ATTEMPT BY THE UNITED STATES TO REOPEN THE ISSUE WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL. (THE PROPOSAL AS APPROVED EXCLUDES ONLY SQUIDS, SPECIFYING THAT ALL BY-CATCHES ARE TO COUNT AGAINST A COUNTRY'S SECOND TIER QUOTA. HOWEVER, THIS IS OF LIMITED VALUE SINCE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS HAVE CONSISTENTLY FAILED TO PROVIDE REASONABLY ACCURATE BYCATCH ESTIMATES, AND U.S. SCIENTISTS VIEW THE BYCATCH IN THE SQUID FISHERIES TO BE MUCH HIGHER (UP TO 50 PERCENT), THAN THAT CONCEDED BY SPAIN, ITALY, AND JAPAN. HENCE, IT SHOULD BE ASSUMED THAT SUBSTANTIAL FINFISH CATCHES WILL TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE OVERALL FINFISH QUOTA. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. THE SQUID ISSUE PROVOKED THE MOST MAJOR U.S.-JAPANESE CONFRONTATION IN HISTORY OF COMMISSION AND JAPANESE DELEGATION MUST BE CREDITED WITH THE LEAD ROLE IN FRUSTRATING THE MAJOR U.S. OBJECTIVE FOR MEETING. SQUID INTERESTS WERE HEAVILY REPRESENTED ON SPANISH

DELEGATION, AND BOTH DELEGATIONS DISPLAYED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PREOCCUPATION WITH ACHIEVING GAINS IN THIS AREA. PRESSURE FOR SUCH GAINS WAS LIKELY CONTRIBUTED TO BY THE NEGLIGIBLE INCREASE IN 1976 OVERALL FIRST TIER SQUID QUOTA (3,000 MT), AND THE ALLOCATION OF 30,000 MT OF THE 74,000 TOTAL FOR THE ILLEX SPECIES WHICH IS OF LIMITED INTEREST TO JAPAN.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF A 1976 60,000 MT GEORGES BANK HERRING QUOTA WAS A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE UNITED STATES. (THE UNITED STATES HAD URGED AT A SPECIAL NOVEMBER 1974 MEETING OF THE COMMISSION THAT THE 1975 150,000 MT QUOTA APPROVED THE PRECEEDING JUNE BE RESET AT A LOWER LEVEL. WHILE THE 1975 GULF OF MAINE QUOTA WAS ADJUSTED, IT WAS AGREED TO ALLOW THE 1975 GEORGES BANK QUOTA TO REMAIN, DEFERRING ANY REDUCTIONS UNTIL 1976.) SUCH A LEVEL WAS VIEWED BY U.S. SPOKESMEN AS NECESSARY TO ASSURE AN ACCEPTABLE CHANCE OF STOCK REIOVERY IN LINE WITH COMMISSION OBJECTIVES. (SCIENTISTS HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THE 1976 QUOTA BE SET "AS CLOSE TO 60,000 MT AS POSSIBLE.") UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING THE STRENGTH OF THE 1973 HERRING YEAR-CLASS PROVIDED THE GRIST FOR MOST ARGUMENTS THAT A HIGHER QUOTA BE ACCEPTED. THE SOVIET UNION, POLAND, AND ROMANIA TOOK THE LEAD IN URGING THAT THE MORE OPTIMISTIC OF TWO ASSUMED RECRUITMENT LEVELS BE ACCEPTED WITH A RESULTING QUOTA IN

THE 75,000-100,000 MT RANGE, AND STRESSED THE ECONOMIC BURDENS A MORE DRASTIC REDUCTION WOULD CREATE. THE UNITED STATES ARGUED THAT THE PROPER APPROACH WAS ONE OF EXTREME CAUTION, AND THAT EVEN A 60,000 MT QUOTA WOULD NOT INITIATE ANY REBUILDING OF THE STOCK IF THE 1973 YEAR-CLASS WAS AT THE LOWER OF TWO ASSUMED LEVELS. VOTES ON A NUMBER OF QUOTAS RANGING FROM 60,000 MT - 100,000 DID NOT PRODUCE A REQUIRED MAJORITY. A DECISION WAS DEFERRED UNTIL A SPECIAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 1976 IN ROME.

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U.S. SCIENTISTS BELIEVE ADDITIONAL DATA AVAILABLE AT THAT TIME WILL STRENGTHEN CASE FOR A QUOTA CLOSE TO OR AT 60,000 MT.

6. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT PARTICIPANTS IN THIS DISCUSSION WITH MAJOR FISHERIES FOR THE STOCK ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION FROM THE 1975 LEVEL OF 150,000 MT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FRG, WHILE NOT ACCEPTING A 60,000 MT QUOTA, VOTED FOR A 70,000 MT LEVEL, ABSTAINED ON VOTES FOR 75,000 MT AND 80,000 MT AND VOTED AGAINST A QUOTA OF 100,000 MT. THE GDR, SOVIET UNION, AND POLAND SUPPORTED QUOTAS OF 70,000, 75,000 AND 80,000 RESPECTIVELY.

7. THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING THROUGH A VARIETY OF MEASURES TO LIMIT BYCATCHES OF SEVERELY DEPLETED

GROUND FISH STOCKS SUCH AS YELLOWTAIL FLOUNDER AND HADDOCK WHICH OCCUR IN FOREIGN FISHERIES DIRECTED TO OTHER SPECIES. THESE SPECIES ARE OF PARTICULAR VALUE TO U.S. FISHERMEN AND PRIOR TO THE PRESENT RESOURCE CRISIS WERE THE MAINSTAY OF THE NEW ENGLAND FISHING INDUSTRY. THE MOST POTENTIALLY EFFECTIVE MEASURE TO SECURE THIS IN THE CRITICAL GEORGES BANK AREA IS THROUGH A YEAR-ROUND CLOSURE TO VESSELS USING GEAR CAPABLE OF CATCHING GROUND FISH. SUCH A PROPOSAL WAS PRESENTED AT THE NOVEMBER 1974 COMMISSION MEETING IN MIAMI AND REPROPOSED WITH SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS AT THIS MEETING. THE ARGUMENT WAS AGAIN RAISED BY THE SOVIET UNION, SPAIN, AND OTHERS THAT SUCH A REGULATION WOULD SERIOUSLY INTERFERE WITH THEIR FISHERIES FOR SPECIES SUCH AS HAKE AND COD. NO AGREEMENT WAS POSSIBLE AND THE MATTER WAS AGAIN DEFERRED.

8. DELIBERATIONS IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT WERE PROLONGED AND YIELDED MINIMAL GAINS. PRIOR TO THE MEETING A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMISSION'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL CONTROL (STACTIC) WAS HELD IN LENINGRAD TO PREPARE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING. RELATIVELY NONCONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS FOR REVISED INSPECTION QUESTIONNAIRES AND REPORTS, AND STANDARDIZED LOGBOOK ENTRIES DEVELOPED AT THE LENINGRAD MEETING WERE APPROVED. THE MOST SUCCESS ON A

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MORE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE WAS ACHIEVED WITH THE APPROVAL OF A REGISTRATION PROCEDURE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH VESSELS IN THE CONVENTION AREA. LIMITED GAINS WERE SECURED IN THE APPROVAL OF GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTARY SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER SCHEMES ESTABLISHED ON A BILATERAL BASIS, AND A PROVISION FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CUMULATIVE CATCH RECORDS BY VESSELS AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. HOWEVER, THE LATTER TWO PROPOSALS ACCOMPLISH SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN WHAT THE U.S. INITIALLY INTENDED. ACTION WAS DEFERRED ON A U.S. PROPOSAL FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ALL VESSELS FISHING IN THE CONVENTION AREA. NO PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED ON A U.S. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO TRAWL FISHERY REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE ESTABLISHED A CEILING ON ALLOWABLE GROUNDIFSH BYCATCHES.

9. PREDICTABLE OPPOSITION GREETED A CANADIAN PROPOSAL FOR A 40 PERCENT REDUCTION FROM THE 1973 LEVEL IN FISHING EFFORT ON ALL GROUNDIFSH STOCKS IN SUBAREAS 2-4 BY LIMITING FISHING DAYS BY VESSELS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. (IT WAS PROPOSED THAT ONLY THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PROPOSAL BE ACCEPTED AT THIS TIME AND A MEANS OF APPLICATION DEVELOPED AT A LATER MEETING.) AGREEMENT WAS ALSO NOT POSSIBLE ON A MILD DRAFT RESOLUTION EXHORTING MEMBERS TO MINIMIZE FISHING EFFORT IN THIS AREA AND NOTIFY THE SECRETARIAT OF

THE AMOUNTS THEY INTEND TO DEPLOY. IT WAS AGREED TO RECONSIDER THIS MATTER AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 22-27, 1975, IN MONTREAL, CANADA. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON TAC'S AND THEIR ALLOCATION FOR A MAJORITY OF REGULATED STOCKS FISHED OFF THE CANADIAN COAST. HOWEVER, AGREEMENT WAS NOT REACHED ON A NUMBER OF STOCKS FOR WHICH CANADA URGED ADOPTION OF A LOWER TAC THAN THAT RECOMMENDED BY THE ICNAF STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND STATISTICS (STACRES) IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR ADEQUATE STOCK REBUILDING. ACCORDINGLY, CONSIDERATION OF QUOTA REGULATIONS FOR 5 STOCKS OF COD, 2 STOCKS OF REDFISH, 1 STOCK OF AMERICAN PLAICE, AND 1 STOCK HADDOCK WERE DEFERRED TO THE SPECIAL MONTREAL MEETING.

10. FOR ALL EMBASSIES:

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NO SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, IF ICNAF RELATED DISCUSSIONS SHOULD ARISE, U.S. CONCERN OVER INADEQUATE CONSERVATION ACTION TAKEN OFF U.S. COAST AND LACK OF RESOLVE IN SOLVING INCREASINGLY SERIOUS ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS SHOULD BE STRESSED. EMPHASIS SHOULD

BE PLACED ON FAILURE TO SET 1976 SECOND TIER TAC AT ADEQUATE LEVEL ON ALL COMPONENTS OF BIOMASS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE U.S. VIEWS THIS AS THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL MEETING SINCE THAT OF JUNE 1973 IN COPENHAGEN WHEN AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE REACHED ON CONSERVATION PROGRAM FOR AREA OFF U.S. COAST OTHER THAN INDIVIDUAL SPECIES QUOTAS. SPECIFIC REPRESENTATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER AND JANUARY SPECIAL MEETINGS, AND DECISIONS ARE NOW BEING MADE ON WHAT IF ANY CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE IN ANTICIPATED AGENDAS FOR THESE MEETINGS. ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS MAY ALSO BE REQUIRED FOLLOWING U.S. DECISIONS ON OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS APPROVED AT SUBJECT MEETING AND SCHEDULED FOR CIRCULATION SHORTLY BY DEPOSITARY GOVERNMENT. THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA DID NOT VOTE FOR SUBAREA 5 PROPOSALS IN FINAL PLENARY DUE TO INADEQUATE LEVEL OF SECOND TIER TAC.

11. FOR OTTAWA:

BOTH U.S. AND CANADIAN DELEGATIONS MADE A POINT OF ASSUMING A UNITED STAND ON ISSUES AFFECTING EACH OFF THEIR RESPECTIVE COASTS. CANADA'S EARLY CALL FOR A SPECIAL FALL MEETING MAY HAVE DONE LITTLE TO STRENGTHEN ITS STAND AT THIS MEETING, BUT COULD BE CONSIDERED A GESTURE TOWARDS REALITY IN VIEW OF THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ITS PROPOSALS. IN ADDITION, CANADIAN PROPOSALS FOR BOTH AN OVERALL EFFORT REDUCTION AND REDUCED FIRST TIER SPECIES QUOTAS WERE NOT

ARGUED AS CONVINCINGLY OR PRESENTED AS FORCEFULLY AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. U.S. AND CANADIAN FISHERIES OFFICIALS WILL BE MEETING SHORTLY (MID-JULY) IN WASHINGTON TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING AND PLANS FOR THE MONTREAL MEETING SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE SEPTEMBER 22. CANDEL SEVERAL TIMES THREATENED TO CLOSE PORTS TO FOREIGN F/V'S IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE CONFIDENTIAL

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AGREEMENT ON SEVERAL POINTS, BUT WHILE THIS GOT ATTENTION OF DELS WHOSE F/V'S USE CANADIAN PORTS EXTENSIVELY, AS SPAIN, PORTUGAL, AND USSR, IT DID NOT MATERIALLY INCREASE SUCCESS OF CANADIAN POSITION. IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COMMENTS OF CANDEL THAT GOC HAS UNILATERAL ACTION ON FISHERIES JURISDICTION UNDER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION, BUT THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE. INGERSOLL

NOTE BY OCT: POUCHED HALIFAX,MONTREAL.

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